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EVACUATION HOSPITAL IN FRANCE.

USE OF THE METRIC SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

MORE extensive use of the metric system in the trade and commerce of the United States is recommended in a resolution adopted by the United States section of the International High Commission, of which Secretary McAdoo is chairman.

The commission has regarded this subject as of particular importance in the United States. It is, of course, unnecessary for the United States section to recommend to the Latin-American sections of the commission anything in connection with the metric system, which is exclusively in use throughout Latin

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America. One of the main obstacles to documentary uniformity as between the United States and Latin America is to be found in the fact that the United States does not make the use of the metric system obligatory, and consequently its consular documents have to allow the use of that system merely as optional. Any uniform system of classifying merchandise, however, will require on the part of the United States thoroughgoing and complete adherence to the metric system.

Of more importance than statistical and administrative questions is the use of the metric system in trade. Now that the United States is obviously being drawn into closer and more vital commercial relations by the rest of the world, and particularly with Latin-America, our manufacturers and exporters will be obliged to meet the demands of their prospective customers in a somewhat more accommodating frame of mind than hitherto. Only the English-speaking nations still have to adopt the metric system of weights and measures, and among them the British Empire, or at least Great Britain, seems to be giving serious consideration to the necessity of making a change. Those who read the Commerce Reports of the United States Department of Commerce know how numerous are the opportunities necessarily allowed to pass by because of our inability to supply goods and machinery constructed in accordance with the metric system. The subject has now assumed a most practical character in the minds of those who are planning for post-war trade expansion.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

We record with regret the death of George F. Atkinson, head of the department of botany at Cornell University; of Volney M. Spalding, formerly professor of botany in the University of Michigan; of Sir Henry Thompson, professor of physiology and later of medicine at Dublin, and of H. E. J. G. du Bois, professor of physics at Utrecht.

An Inter-Allied Scientific Conference has met in London under the auspices of the Royal Society, and in Paris under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences, to consider international cooperation in science. The American delegates are: Dr. H. A. Bumstead, Colonel J. J. Carty, Professor W. F. Durand, Dr. Simon Flexner, Dr. George E. Hale, and Professor A. A. Noyes.

The Swedish Academy has awarded the Noble prize for physics for the year 1917 to Professor C. G. Barkla, professor of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, for his work on X-rays and secondary rays. The prize in physics for 1918 and that in chemistry for 1917 and 1918 have been reserved.—The Royal Society has awarded its Darwin medal to Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History, in recognition of his research work in vertebrate morphology and paleontology. The Copley medal goes to Professor H. A. Lorentz, late professor of physics in the University of Leyden, For. Mem. R.S., for his researches in mathematical physics; the Davy medal to Professor F. S. Kipping, F.R.S., professor of chemistry, University College, Nottingham, for his studies in the camphor group and among the organic derivatives of nitrogen and silicon; and a Royal medal to Professor F. G. Hopkins, F.R.S., professor of bio-chemistry in the University of Cambridge, for his researches in chemical physiology.